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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2017  
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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER INCIDENT

REF: STATE 18502

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (S) Ambassador, accompanied by PolCouns and Assistant Air Attache, called on MOD Pol-Mil Director Amos Gilad February 15 to deliver reftel demarche (DATT separately demarched IDF Head of Strategic Planning and International Cooperation Division BG Udi Dekel). Ambassador noted that after reviewing the imagery, we had determined that some of the clearing operation carried out by the IDF the night of February 7 had in fact been on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line. The Ambassador then showed Gilad the imagery, including the cleared area and with the Blue Line delineated, noting that he was authorized to show Gilad the imagery but not to leave it with him. The Ambassador stressed that our intent was not to lay blame but to underscore the importance of Israel continuing to cooperate as closely as possible with UNIFIL and the LAF.

¶2. (S) Gilad thanked the Ambassador, and without challenging the imagery, he noted that the IDF had believed they were operating within the Blue Line. He asked that the imagery be shared in intelligence channels so that the Israelis could examine it carefully. Gilad added that he would like to show the imagery to newly sworn-in IDF Chief of General Staff Ashkenazi. MOD COS BG Mike Herzog, who joined the meeting in progress, said part of the problem was that the border was not demarcated in that area, and he observed that demarcation could help prevent future incidents.

¶3. (S) Responding to the Ambassador's political message about UNIFIL and the LAF, Gilad said the IDF's February 12 meeting with the LAF and UNIFIL had gone very well, adding that they had agreed to continue to meet. Gilad assured the Ambassador that Israel had not intended to provoke the Lebanese. Gilad praised Prime Minister Siniora as "very courageous," adding that after Hizballah's failure to bring down the Siniora government, the Syrians "want to eat him alive."

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JONES